

Red Action

10p

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Box 44, 136, Kingsland High Rd, London E8

Remember Bobby Sands

A YEAR has now passed since the murder of 27 year old Bobby Sands, MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone and Officer Commanding Republican POW's in the H Blocks of Long Kesh. His murder was followed over 6 months, by 9 of his brave comrades. And even today after this tremendous struggle the question of political status is still not completely settled. The struggles in the H Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh continue as does the struggle in Ireland as a whole.

The 10 hunger strikers were not the only injuries inflicted by the British state on the Irish working class. Sean McKenna, one of the original 7 hunger strikers, who called off his fast after 53 days after being conned by Humphrey Atkins, is still lying in a prison hospital with his sight nearly gone, unable to stand for any length of time, and for most of the time totally incoherent. Yet the Brits are still not prepared to give him the medical attention he needs or grant him compassionate early release.

The British Army took every possible opportunity to maim or murder Catholic working class youth over the 6 months. One of the first to die was 15 year old Paul Whithers, killed by a plastic bullet. Many were to follow, and needless to say no British soldiers were brought to trial, let alone convicted.

The hunger strike, due to the sadistic brutality of the British, brought the issue of the Irish freedom struggle to the forefront throughout the world. It showed the undercurrent of support which exists for the war, especially amongst the Irish working class and Irish youth.

The election of Bobby Sands in the North and 2 IRA members in the South, wiped away years of British attempts to criminalise the Irish people's struggle for national liberation.

False Friends

The hunger strike also helped to expose the true role of some of the organisations which claim to be on the side of the oppressed. The Catholic Church, the SDLP, and Sinn Fein - the "Workers" Party. All three lined up with their British pay-masters to undermine the confidence of the hunger strikers themselves and their supporters.

In the south the pathetic grovelling of Fianna Fail leader and Taoiseach Charles Haughey, and the contempt with which he and other

leaders of the southern Catholic bourgeoisie were treated by Thatcher, showed quite clearly the true neo-colonial nature of the so called Irish Republic, a state completely incapable of following any policy which clashes with the interests of the British ruling class. As Connolly foresaw as long ago as 1897:

"If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individual institutions she has planted in the country."

Solidarity

The main support for the prisoners around the world came from the working class and the oppressed.

In America, dockers on the East coast blacked all British goods, in the cities, Blacks and Puerto Ricans demonstrated. In Germany and Italy workers demonstrations coincided with

bombings of British owned property. Anti-British demonstrations occurred in Tehran. The French-speaking people of Quebec showed their support. In France massive Trade Union sponsored demonstrations occurred, one march attracted over 30,000 people. After the first death, French workers and students staged sit-ins on trains at channel ports.

In Ireland itself, after Bobby Sands' murder, Belfast dockers walked out, and there were spontaneous strikes by workers all over the South. In Belfast and Derry working class youth pushed the Army out of large areas of both cities and held them against overwhelming odds over a period of days. In August serious rioting broke out on the streets of Dublin, the first time since the 1913 lockout.

While the working class were demonstrating, striking, marching and rioting in open expressions of solidarity with the prisoners, the men of property were wheeling and dealing, trying to defuse and neutralise the support which existed for them. In the end the Catholic church in the shape of Father Dennis Faul and Bishop Edward Daley did



California



YOU CAN KILL THE REVOLUTIONARY BUT NOT THE REVOLUTION!

Britain's dirty work by emotionally blackmailing the hunger strikers relatives into ending the fasts.

The murder of 10 brave Irishmen in a display of personal revenge and bloodlust by Thatcher, and calculated sadistic murder by the forces she represents, was a heavy price to pay for the consequent swelling of support and the process of consciousness raising that went on during the six months.

The dedication and self sacrifice of our Irish comrades

will be an inspiration to Irish workers in the long hard struggle ahead for Irish freedom. In that struggle only one class can stay true to that ideal - the working class. Many Irish revolutionaries realised this, Tone in the 1790's, Fintan Lalor in the 1840's, Connolly at the beginning of this century and after him Liam Mellows. Connolly in one of his last articles before his death summed it up thus:

"We are out for Ireland, for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting slum-owning landlord; not the sweating profit grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared. The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland. The cause of Ireland is the cause of labour."

The truth of this has been proved time and again since 1916.

Red Action salutes the self-sacrifice of the 10 hunger strikers. We will do all we can with our limited resources to help build support for the Irish people. The armed struggle in the North-east of Ireland is pushing forward the process of destruction for

Continued on back page

FALKLANDS

HYPOCRISY

REMEMBER when Argentina played host to the world in the World Cup 1978? There wasn't a lot in the Sun and Daily Mail about the fact that it was governed by a fascist military dictatorship who were responsible for torturing and murdering thousands of political opponents. There weren't many MPs wanting to boycott the World Cup.

Big firms like Ferranti, Vickers, Westland, Rolls Royce have important military contracts with Argentina and were delivering their weapons of war up to a few days before the Falklands invasion. The British government was assisting its anti-communist ally to refit their navy.

Suddenly the gutter press have discovered that the Argentine junta are not nice people at all and are busy firing the fantasies of every war-mongering, nationalistic maniac in the country. Thatcher and her crew are hoping to restore their severely damaged reputation with a military adventure, in exactly the same way as the Argentine regime did when it invaded the Falklands.

The message for the working people of both countries is the same 'Unite behind the flag

and forget the appalling economic mess that we have inflicted on you'.

The people to suffer most from war are of course, the Falkland Islanders and many of them have been imploring the British Government to consider their real interests rather than the ridiculous notion of British sovereignty.

War will only strengthen the hold of the fascist junta over its people - in fact fascism can only survive on a continual diet of war and military expansion. The best way to give support to those forces in Argentina who want to bring down the dictatorship is by refusing to arm it or trade with it. We can expect that idea to be firmly resisted by the capitalists who make money from the trade, particularly those who profit from war by supplying weapons to both sides, and their pals in the Tory Government.

The rank hypocrisy of the Thatcher government is especially revealed when they talk about self-determination for the Falkland Islanders, having along with successive Labour governments absolutely denied the right of self-determination to the Irish people as a whole.



Forces of destruction

INSIDE

TRADE UNION SPECIAL

Tories put the boot in

It's The Same

Leaders
Or
Led?

ON the face of it trade unions appear to be run like their capitalist counterparts, as a business, that is because they are!

Trade union bureaucrats do pore over accounts books, investing union funds in property, works of art, and generally capitalise on capitalism. These union officials were in their younger days some of the best militants the working class had to offer. But the way to the top by working within the official trade union structures, ultimately leads to collaboration and respectability. To get on you have to stop 'rocking the boat'. You have to prove that your first loyalty is to your new social group: the trade union bureaucracy.

If and when you are allowed (most fulltimers are appointed, formally or informally) into the elite world of the bureaucrat, you undergo your very own social revolution. Tax-free expense accounts, interest free mortgages and a salary probably 3 to 4 times your members' average wages!

Alongside this economic miracle goes the inevitable change in attitudes and political opinions. Strikes, works to rule, overtime bans, in fact any self-activity by your members tends to disrupt your lifestyle. You become a 'policeman', a 'manager of discontent' of the workforce. You see your function within strict limits, wages, conditions, etc.

Socialism becomes a utopian ideal - a threat to your social position, militant shop stewards become a thorn in your side. The state of your union funds becomes more important than your members' interests.

Nevertheless, trade unions have always been the expression of the organised working class. They have been the defence of the class in the continual conflict between bosses and workers about who gets what share of the wealth which workers alone produce. The trade unions however will not be the agent by which workers will take control of that wealth nor will the working class spontaneously and instinctively do the 'right thing' when 'the time' comes. Workers and socialists who realise this will therefore fight to build militancy in, and solidarity across, workplaces everywhere.

We must build a movement in the unions which will give us our greatest advantages in the class war.

NORMAN TEBBITT, Tory Minister in charge of the Department of Unemployment thinks so. Not content with throwing millions of people on the dole and breaking up whole communities, the Tories are now pushing through a Bill designed to crush the unions, the only defence which working class people have to protect their jobs and living standards.

What exactly is the Tebbit Bill all about? It will for a start ban solidarity action with other workers in dispute. In strikes the most effective way of winning is by going out to other workers to ask for their help, especially in strikes where the union is weak and not well organised, a fairly basic principle that unity is strength. Even the bosses recognise the logic of this principle when one sees the solidarity between employers in blacklisting militant Trade Unionists (basically those with the guts to stand up to the bosses) getting together to make all sorts of dirty business deals and tax fiddles, giving money to the Tories and so on.

The Bill would also ban what the Government thinks are political strikes and strikes against Government policy, so much for the great bureaucracy we are supposed to have in this country. Judges will decide what is and what is not political and we all know what that means; cut the bus/tube fares and you are judged to be acting illegally. Judges by their nature are anti working class and even at their most lenient are not likely to look kindly upon workers stepping out of their place, trying to protect their living standards, working conditions or fighting for their jobs.

Union Funds

The Tebbit Bill also attacks union funds since employers will be able to claim compensation for "unlawful" action by Trade Unionists engaged in a dispute. A bloody cheek when they can get away with throwing people onto the dole, screwing your wages and openly ignoring the law on things like health and safety at work. The Bill would also allow scabs who refuse to join unions to milk up to £20,000 out of union funds in a move designed to wreck the closed shop.

The closed shop is one of the most effective weapons workers have in defending



Hand in glove.....

themselves and an attack on it could undermine union organisation and thereby pay and conditions. The Bill also has other obnoxious parts to it, eg agreements requiring sub-contractors to employ union-only labour are to be made unenforceable. This would enable such employers to ignore Trade Union safety provisions and pay less than the full rate for the job.

Unfortunately many working class people agree with the Tories that unions have too much power or the popular notion that they are all a bunch of commies. The truth is that unions are the organisations of the working class; meant to fight for their interests and protect their living standards. Without unions, em-

ployers would be able to get away with sweat shop labour eg the Garment firms in London's East End and conditions similar to those on YOPs schemes etc. And after all the bosses have their own unions. The Confederation of British Industry; the Engineering Employers Federation, who fight tooth and nail to make sure that their members carry on making huge profits on the sweat of their workforce.

Cynical

What does cause people to be cynical and disillusioned about unionists is the antics of the trade union leaders and bureaucrats; people who get paid salaries miles beyond what their members earn and are more interested in their own careers than fighting for the interests of their members. People like Duffy and Chapple are not the great moderate leaders that the *Daily Mail* makes them out to be but rats who are more interested in sabotaging the fight of their members over jobs etc and making deals with the bosses.

The fight against the Tebbit Bill ultimately also involves a fight against such people. Red Action believes that a rank and file movement needs to be built in the unions which will fight not only against the likes of Tebbit but also the sell out leaders of the union.



...him? with

Ultimately the Tebbit Bill can only be defeated by defiance of the law. This means showing solidarity with those on strike; defending the closed shop even if the Bill becomes law; boycotting court proceedings brought under the law; and taking strike action in cases where the law is used. It is absolutely essential that the Bill is fought in the here and now instead of waiting for its repeal by some future Labour government (which after all in the past has tried to introduce similar measures).

BOB Darke is 73 years old and lived for most of his life in Hackney. He now lives in Hainault on a council estate. He was on the Unemployed Workers Council representing the London District during the thirties. He took an active leading role in the fight against Mosely particularly in the Ridley Road area of Hackney, where he was elected as a Communist councillor. He was awarded the Tolpuddle Martyrs Medal for services to the Trade Union Movement for organising the sweatshops in Hackney and was a member of the International Brigade Committee. He was the president of Hackney Trades Council and a member of the FBU Executive during the 2nd World War when he was a fireman. He was Branch Secretary of the NDO of Post office workers and member of the London District council for five years. Since he retired he has played a leading role in the Tenants Movement which he still carries on in Hainault where he lives today.

Part of my boyhood upbringing was spent in a Trade Union Branch where I was taken by my father every Sunday morning at a working men's club called the Landsdowne. My father was a skilled craftsman, and in the 16th, 17th, and 18th century Trade Unions, although they were not called as such were made up of workmen of different crafts, some being very conservative in outlook as a working class elite. This wasn't so with my father's Union, (he was a glass blower) and as we drifted into the 20th century the Trade Unions became more politically conscious with wider aims and objectives. They talk about the closed shop today. In those days no man could

blow a glass bottle or make a street door without being a member of a craft union.

When the General Strike was called I was seventeen. I was working in a Saw Mill in Bethnal Green and I put on my coat and said to the foreman "I support the strike" "Get your coat off you silly arse" replied the foreman. "No" I said, "I support

Miners

the Miners" and out I walked. Right through my Trade Union and political life I had a very close affinity with the Miners. In the Communist Party for 20 years I worked with Arthur Horner leader of the Miners



This is an article written from personal experience. Gary became a shop steward whilst in North London.

I began working in a North London factory in the late 1970s (76); became a shop steward in May 77; and was sacked in June 78. As a shop steward I wouldn't play the game and wasn't bothered to learn the various procedures. I wanted confrontation and as newly converted to socialist activism I couldn't understand why everyone didn't share my impatience and enthusiasm.

Initially management wielded the stick; verbal warnings; no overtime, getting stuck with shit jobs. Then it was the carrot; little perks that resulted in a kick back; which I always shared with the other workers. None of this changed my attitude so they got a bigger stick: written warnings; suspensions and sackings; next a bigger carrot; sitting on various committees; drinking tea and eating biscuits. I soon knocked that on the head when I found out what the

management were getting up to while I was away from the shop floor.

As time went on I collected warnings legitimate and illegitimate; but the management had decided to get rid of me and once that decision was taken the result was almost inevitable. I spent my time trying to wriggle out from underneath a suspension; warnings; the sack. They just kept waiting for me to fuck up or plan the next frame up. The only buffer against this victimisation was the solidarity of my workmates and the retaliatory action we took in our defence; strikes; sabotage; tightening up on demarcation; other working practices to screw up the smooth running of the factory.

One thing became obvious; management love official procedure to follow into which

Join Red Action!

If you agree with what you've just read, why not join us? Or perhaps you'd just like to know about where we stand on other political issues. Alternatively, you might disagree with something in the paper. Whatever, happens, write and let Red Action know

Name

Address

Help You To Win — Sometimes

The Old Song



General Strike 1926: "Nothing moves without our permission"

Union and worked with him when the Unemployed workers were organised in the thirties.

It is to the credit of the Miners and the local Trades Councils that we were able to build up the powerful Unemployed Workers Movement which assisted in bringing down

the Stanley Baldwin Tory Anti Trade Union Government. All our Unemployed leaders were people of solid Trade Union background like Wal Hannington of the AEU.

In the Party, whether it be the Communist Party or any other socialist political organisa-

tion you may share your aspirations and view of the class struggle with academics, intellectuals, professors, writers etc, but in the factory, the mill, in the Docks, driving buses or trains or on the conveyor belt, in the Trade Union branch you are with your own class in the same struggle. Class consciousness does not begin in political circles but on the factory floor and in the union branch. This is the first step in the struggle against the Bosses and, eventually, the Capitalism which creates mass

dignity

unemployment, poverty and loss of dignity which eventually attacks our Trade Union Movement.

Working class solidarity is not built up in the House of Commons. That's where the attacks on our rights are enacted, and indeed the betrayal of our movement, as was the case by the Ramsey MacDonald Labour Government and the Callaghan Government who used the Army to smash the Firemen's and Ambulancemen's strike.

Today we are living in the same situation which confronted us in the thirties, with the workers having more to lose such as the Welfare state and the National Health Service which we attained as parts of

the peoples victory over Hitler's fascism. Numerically the Trade Union Movement is greater than at any time in it's History, but by its disunity weaker than since the betrayal of the General Strike. No real attempt has been made to organise the unemployed who represent a large percentage of the working class. They have retreated in wages demands, accepting wage increases dictated by the bosses, which don't even meet the increase in the cost of living. Instead of fighting for jobs they have encouraged their members to accept redundancy pay which is tantamount to selling their jobs back to the boss, and in certain unions reaching a degree of treachery by encouraging their members to do business with private health services which undermine the National Health Service.

It does appear that the trade union movement is losing its way to such an extent that the Tories bragged over 2m trade unionists helping them to power and there is no guarantee that the same won't happen again. The old adage of

sell out

maintaining good relations with the bosses, and working with any government, Tory or Labour, that is quoted by certain Trade Union Leaders is a myth. The fact is that the

Tories are not working with the Trade Unions today any more than did Tory Baldwin or Chamberlain in the thirties.

On the contrary the Tories are out to smash the unions and for the unions to carry on

Nothing can be gained without struggle: that's how the Union Movement was built. I used to organise workers outside the factory gates and outside the labour exchanges organising the unemployed.



the argument about 'good relations' is selling the Movement and the members down the river. If the Unions do not come off the defensive sooner rather than later, they won't have much left to defend. It's a question of getting back on course, to fight to retain workers' jobs and stop collaborating with the bosses, get down to organising the unemployed as part of the Labour Movement.

It's all part of the same struggle. For the Trade Unions to sit back and wait for a Labour government could be fatal. In 1929 we beat the Tory government only to be betrayed by the MacDonald Labour government. The strongest line of defence for the working class whatever government is in power is a powerful united Trade Union Movement and it's this power which should be used today.

THE RANK AND FILE RESPONSE

THE ability of the trade unions to fight back against the attacks of a vicious anti-working class government depends on the solidarity within its own ranks. The problem is that many workers feel that the union at local or national level is something apart from them, out of their control and not representing their interests, and their willingness to defend it is therefore undermined.

This problem is not new. As long as there have been large and effective national union organisations — since the end of the 19th century — there has been a tendency by the full time officers to move away from the membership — in their lifestyle and their political ideas they have grown closer to the bosses with which they spend so much of their time.

But against this 'bureaucratic' trend there have also been 'rank and file' movements within unions which set out to bring the leaders under control and to unite workers across the false barriers of different trades, factories and areas.

During the First World War there was a national shop stewards movement, based largely in the engineering industry. In the twenties there was another attempt to bring together the militant centres of trade unionism in the National Minority Movement. The ultimate aim was 'complete workers control of industry' — which is the aim of genuine socialists today.

The post-war industrial boom made it relatively easy for employers to head off increasing working class militancy by offering better wages and conditions. Shop stewards again became the powerful focus of trade union activity but there seemed little need to build any structure which would link workers in different unions and different areas. For



this reason it has been difficult to build the rank and file movements which are today necessary to force the trade union leaders to fight, now that we again have a massive recession.

Unfortunately it must be stated that even the limited successes (particularly in white collar jobs like teaching and local government) have been frittered away by the mistaken policies and bitter feuding between political groups which sought to build influence and

control rank and file groups.

The Communist Party (which is very different today from the revolutionary organisation that organised the minority movements) — along with much of the Labour Party left, has built 'broad left' tendencies and groups in a number of unions, whose main aim is electing and keeping in office union leaders and MPs who are regarded as 'left-wing'. Meanwhile the people who really matter — the militant trade unionists — are used as a stage army to be marched backwards and forwards according to the needs of the 'left' leaders at any particular time.

The International Socialists (IS) — now the Socialist

Workers Party — certainly recognised the importance of organising at workplace level and that union leaders, whether right or left, could not be relied on to defend or advance workers' interests. Unfortunately most of the rank and file groups which they were instrumental in creating were too dependent for resources and personnel on the political group.

When the political line changed from building a National Rank and File movement to building the Right to Work campaign, or to simply building the revolutionary party above all things, many of the rank and file papers and the associated activity just disappeared or were severely damaged.

Red Action do not see the point in building rank and file groups which are simply seen as the recruiting ground of a particular party and in common with most workers, we are suspicious of rank and file papers which are merely the mouthpieces of political sects.

An example of political mistakes undermining workers' ability to organise can be found in the building industry. During the 1972 national strike flying pickets were very effectively used across the country. The CP-dominated 'Charter' group, as well as members of IS, quite correctly did not trust the officials to secure a wage increase and organised militants to take control of the local strike committees.

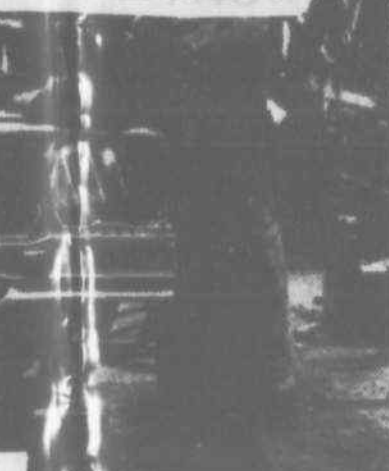
The biggest increase in the history of the buildings was won, but then nine months

afterwards the employers and police struck back and charged 24 of the Shrewsbury flying pickets with a number of trumped up charges including conspiracy. There was considerable feeling in the industry but it was pissed away in a series of one day token strikes aimed at putting pressure on the TUC and Labour MPs.

Those that trusted the 'left' leaders to do the job for them were sadly disappointed and unlike the five dockers at Pentonville, who were released following mass trade union action — many of the Shrewsbury lads went to jail. Des Warren went down for three years and at the end of that time was a physical wreck as a result of the drugs that were used on him there. From that point the 'Charter' group went down the hill. As more and more CP members became full time officials so it was less and less able to criticise or move independently of them. The reaction of the IS leadership, which knew next to nothing about the building industry, was to attack its building worker members for being soft on the CP and order them to form their own rank and file group. Many of them resigned and eventually formed the Building Worker group which has survived to the present day with its own paper and free from the political control of any particular party.

It is this kind of rank and file group that Red Action members aim to support to transform the unions into fighting organisations of the working class.

rot and the Stick



they can channel and dissipate aggression.

Another stunt pulled by an intelligent management: instead of the head banger approach to involve the committed shop steward in the management's problems (ie running the factory). Once the steward accepts this approach he begins to make realistic decisions (sell outs). The usual reward for this type of behaviour is promotion to foreman; if he stays on as a steward he is generally worse than useless.

As a steward don't expect to be popular; be wary of the traps which will be laid for you and resist all attempts to turn against your members by either local management or union full-timers. The unions were built by the rank and file; we're going to get them back.

Grounds For Rebellion

YOUTH Culture has always spoken in the voice of rebellion. From the Rock and Roll of the fifties through the Flower Power of the sixties and Punk of the seventies, the message has been the same. A rejection of the standards and values handed down by parents, teachers and the Establishment. All left their mark on society to a greater or lesser extent. Take the Hippie era for example, before it you would never have seen an office worker with hair over his collar, now you wouldn't even notice.

Both the Hippie and Punk Movements started off as idealistic, vaguely political outbursts, and both lost much of their drive and energy when joined by all sorts of trendies and handwagon jumpers.

Of all the movements that have come and gone the only one that has remained consistent is that of the football terraces, and along with the skinheads it has remained true to its origins and solidly working class. Yet it is these two groups that have been most influenced by the fascist movement. Why should this be?

Football has for a long time been an important working class pastime. Apart from Glasgow, where for a century Celtic and Rangers have represented religious differences, the cult of adopting a team as a life's vocation did not happen until the early sixties. It began in the more economically deprived areas of the North. Thousands of young and not so young working class people would while away the boring hours of their under paid jobs dreaming of the excitement and glamour of Saturday.

Ingenuity

Many would show great ingenuity, travelling the length and breadth of the country in a variety of ways on little or no money. Soon clashes between rival fans were a regular occurrence. The universal condemnation poured upon them by the despised press media and Establishment served only to heighten the feeling of rebellious achievement. It became the natural arena for young working class kids to achieve the success and admiration from friends denied to them by soul destroying work and life style.

As long as you showed courage and commitment you were a name, a somebody. Not just an anonymous figure in a Lowry painting. With the spread of unemployment and economic depression in the South East, the younger generations who had not know the 'good old days' responded in the same way as their northern counterparts and the level of passion of the southern foot-

ball fans which had been at a much lower level rose correspondingly.

In 1978 Martin Webster, activities organiser of the National Front was quoted in the *Evening Standard* as saying 'I have always admired the passion and commitment of Manchester United fans and their ability to devote themselves to an ideal'. Webster is known for his Strasserite outlook (building a Fascist Movement based on the working class). He and his associates saw that the football fighters movement was based on an anti establishment rebellious feeling. By posing as a revolutionary movement

that contemptuously dismissing those who from their earliest days have rejected traditional education, the Law and all the other methods of social control, it's not hard to see who the real rebel is.

No one would try to pretend that the football terraces are full of committed revolutionary socialists. There are cowards, braggards and bullies, and racism and sexism abounds. This does no more than reflect society as it is. The racism on the football terraces did not start there. It came from a racist society. The way in

which football fighters differ from the society they come from is in their general rejection of the standards and laws of that society, and their willingness to risk the anger and punishment of that society in defying it.

Football fans, skinheads, punk rockers, all will be the older working class of tomorrow. They will not be the only people needed to build a working class movement, but they will certainly be a most significant and enthusiastic part of it. If the Left cannot begin to relate to these people we might as well give up and go home.



they have attracted thousands of young angry working class kids, mostly from the suburbs and New Towns around London where there is little or no working class tradition to oppose them. They acted, while socialists, liberals and all manner of so called progressives and revolutionaries lined up with the Establishment and condemned young football fans as mindless, moronic hooligans.

Mindless my arse. When you see someone who has conformed to what they are told to do all their life, who studied hard at school just like mummy and daddy said, who made sure that they had their University degree and safe career before announcing that they don't believe in a capitalistic society, when you see someone like

BOBBY SANDS

both Orange and Green ruling classes and could lead to a serious defeat for our own.

Unlike some left-wing groups we refuse to confuse dreams and reality. The vanguard of the working class in Ireland is its most oppressed section - the Catholic working class in the occupied north-east. There is no progressive role to be played by Protestant workers in the fight for Ireland's freedom until they break the shackles of Orange ideology which keeps them bound to their own ruling class. Most if not all, of Protestant working class militancy has been used to keep the Catholics down. The Trade Unions in Ulster have adapted themselves to fit into the sectarian structure of the North of Ireland state. They

have never challenged Orange ideology. The one major example of class unity, the unemployed struggle in 1932 over the reduction of dole benefits, was smashed within months because in the final analysis, the Protestant unemployed were prepared to believe that unemployed Catholics were their main enemy, not Orange capitalists. Protestant workers will only have a progressive role to play in Ireland's history when the sectarian Orange state is destroyed.

The IRA and INLA are the two main groups fighting to smash Orange fascism. Unlike many middle-class English left-wing groups, we refuse to stand on the sidelines demanding a pure revolution (maybe Warren Beatty could write the script!) or indulge in the purile pacifism which seems to be the hallmark of many revolutionary groups in this country. We give our unconditional support to those groups fighting oppression in Ireland.

The best tribute we can pay to the hunger strikers, and the men and women involved in the armed struggle is to build support for the Irish people, here in Britain. It is a task many left-wing groups shy away from. Red Action will not.



New York

RED ACTION ROUNDUP

A group of Red Action supporters took part in the El Salvador demonstration on March 28, sales of the paper went quite well and many people voiced sympathy to our views and aim.

However it was towards the end of the rally that Red Action made its most dynamic intervention. A mob of NF thugs led by a vicious looking Nazi in full commando gear tried to intimidate some of the demonstrators.

With some comrades from Socialist Organiser we put a team together to go and have a chat with them. When the master rascal saw us coming they turned to jelly and the crank in commando gear ran to the nearest copper begging for police protection and a police escort out the area.

Thousands of people demonstrated that day against Reagan's crimes in El Salvador and US support for the brutal military dictatorship there which has murdered over 35,000 people in the last two years.

About 350 people marched with Sinn Fein from Hyde Park to Kilburn to mark the commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1916. The numbers have been going down year by year. The majority of the 'revolutionary socialist' groups were again notable by their absence. No wonder republicans consider that the British left totally fails to take the Irish revolutionary tradition seriously. Red Action members participated and sold papers. However it must be said that it was unfortunate that the republicans were again split this year. Many people at the Kilburn rally were surprised to see another 50 strong demonstration marching to another rally in the next street. Whatever the reasons for this we sincerely hope that next year there will be a united demonstration.

For the past five weeks Islington shoppers have been free of the usual group of Nazi thugs trying to sell their papers at Chapel Market in Islington. Because of consistent work by Red Action and ANL members, the NF have found it increasingly difficult to do their usual Sunday sale and had become reliant on Nazis from South London and Brighton.

Red Action supporters were on the 3rd April demonstration against the frame up of 12 Asian youth from Bradford. A very successful social was held in Manchester for the Rochdale 8 defence fund on the same weekend.

Why Red Action?

WHEN Red Action was formed late in 1981, we had no choice but to organise ourselves as some of us had been kicked out of the SWP.

The reasons given for our expulsions were many and varied, and often ridiculous, but the enactment was always the same; the intellectual mostly middle-class, ex-student leadership showed their distaste for the raucous manners of their working class membership.

We are proud of the image of being able to back up our words with action, but we have been accused of being no better than the fascists, a squad of "macho boot-boys". This is particularly insulting to the courage and commitment of the women in the group.

We believe that we can justify our existence to the most critical and cynical audience of all - the working class.

We believe that socialism belongs to the working class and that any true socialist organisation, must be able to give a lead to the class, but it must also be able to reflect the spirit and consciousness of the class.

Red Action seeks to become an organisation in that image. To win the trust and respect of ordinary, working class people by proving its consistency and dedication in action.

We do not seek to imitate the traditional left, we seek to work in areas that they neglect. We will be attempting to present socialist politics in a way that identifies with working class people in their life, their work and their leisure.

We will continue to physically defend socialist initiatives from fascist disruption and attack, and we will support, where we can, the struggle for Irish liberation.

We do not attempt to romanticise or underestimate the task we are undertaking, but we believe we can take the first steps towards creating a real workers organisation.

We have few members, no financial backing and no resources. We do have the total dedication and commitment of all our members. If you agree with, or have sympathy with us, please support us - by joining us, contributing financially or supporting our activities.

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RED ACTION

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